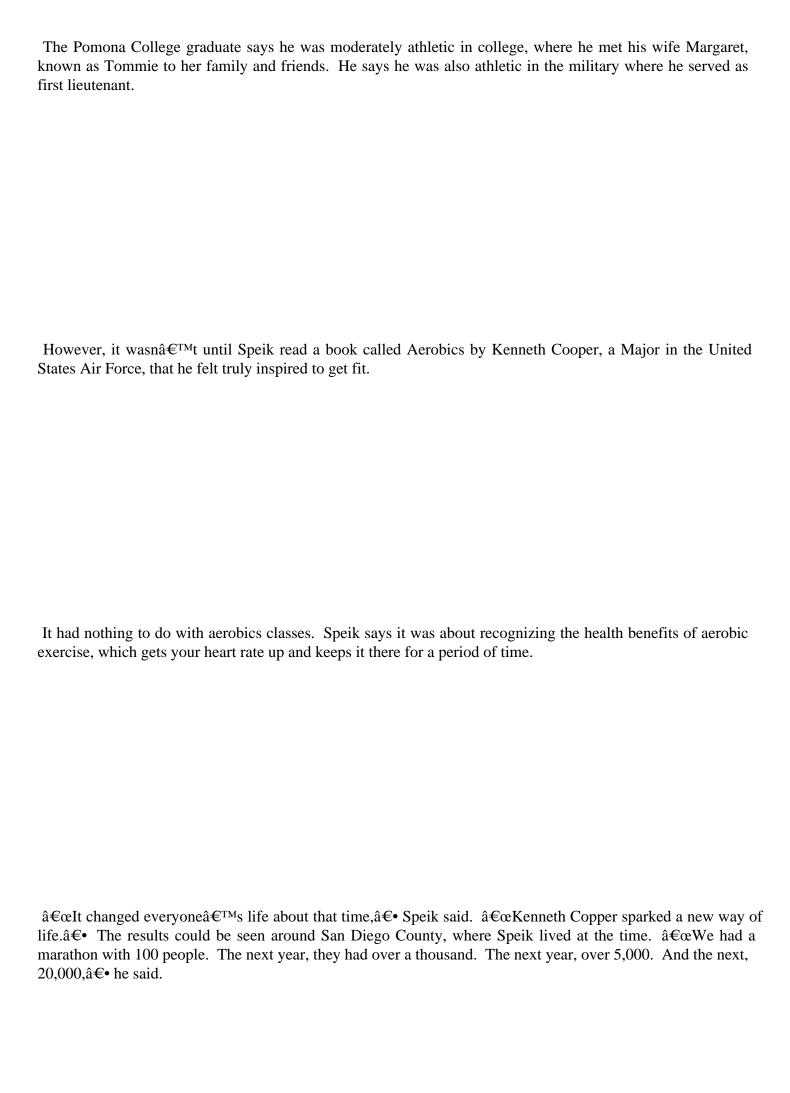
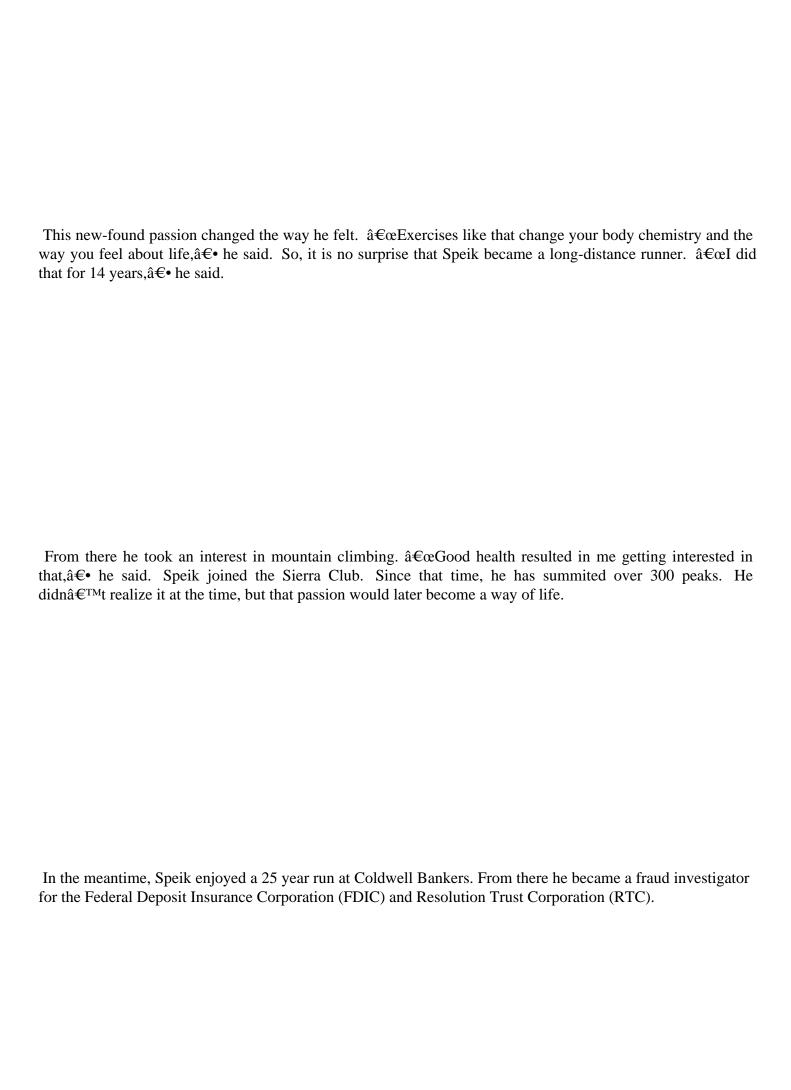
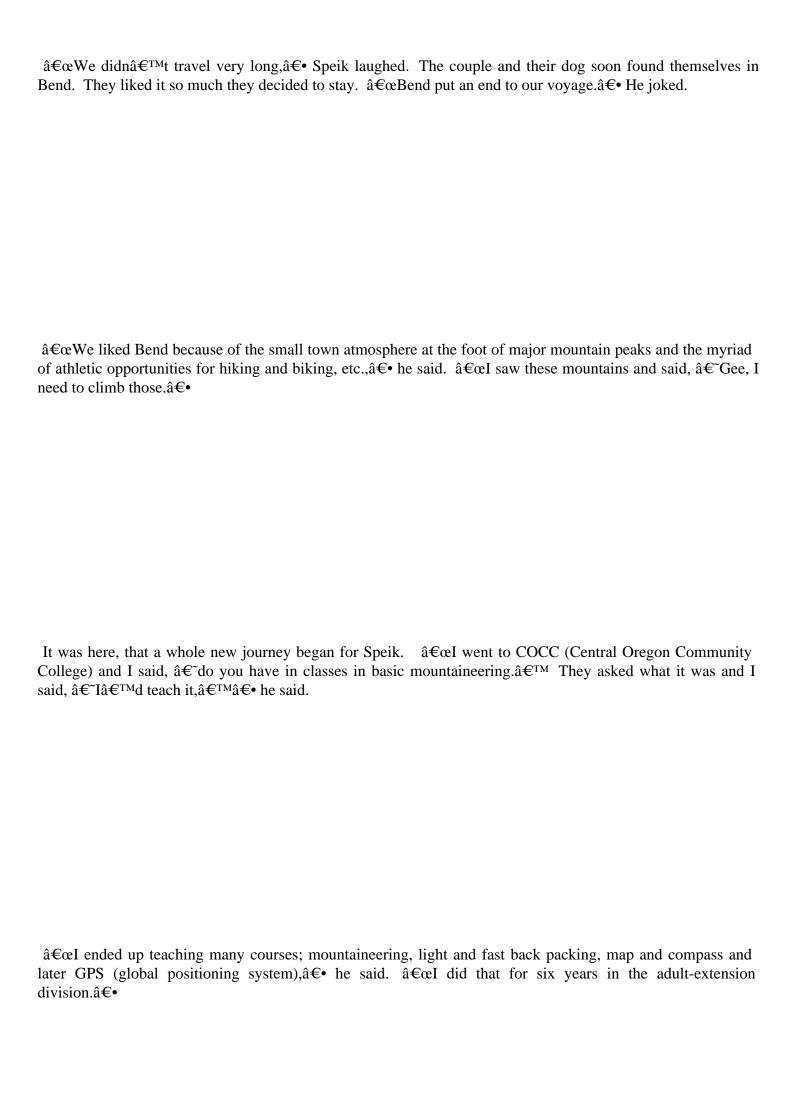
by K_Guice
78 Years Old, Still Climbing Climbing a mountain in the Cascades, most would not expect to be side-by-side with an 80-year-old man. However, if Robert Speik gets his birthday wish, someone will do just that.
Currently 78, the Bend mountaineer is already making plans on how he will climb North Sisters and Mount
Jefferson. "I don't know that anyone has climbed them at that age,― Speik said. "I bet you, I might be the oldest.―
All Photos courtesy of Bob Speik, TraditionalMountaineering.org Neither age, nor conventional wisdom has ever gotten in the way of Speik's goals. The former successful mortgage banker didn't start taking a serious interest in athletics until his early 40s.

Bend Up Close: Bob Speik - 78 Years Old, Still Climbing





During a summer break in between jobs, Speik and his wife decided to do something they had dreamed of since college. "We toured Europe in our VW bus for a whole summer,― he said. The couple, along with their three children Frederick, Sarah and Katherine, camped for three months throughout the region.
In his 50s, Speik moved to Newport Beach, where he found a new interest. "We took off in sailboat racing.― He developed a great love for the sport.
While he and his wife enjoyed Newport, when he retired at 60, they decided to sell their home and travel the country in their motor home. "I think it was an alternative to cruising the world in a yacht, which I always wanted to do,― he said.



Meanwhile, he also founded a mountaineering club in Bend called the Cascade Mountaineers. "That is prospering today,― he said proudly. "I was the founder. I spend two years as the president and built it up to about 300 families.―
From there, Speik created TraditionalMountaineering.org. The mission of his web site is to provide free information and instruction about basic and advanced mountain climbing, safety skills, gear, off-trail hiking, light and fast backpacking techniques, as illustrated through shared mountaineering adventures.
Traditional Mountaineering provides free seminars, hikes, backpacking and peak climbs in the Three Sisters Wilderness. Speik also organizes community service outings.

He says more people need to get educated before they head up the mountain. That is why he created the site. "My purpose is to teach people the skills to avoid the risks of some of these peaks,― he said.
Recent news stories highlight the potential dangers that people can encounter when they $\hat{a} \in \mathbb{T}^M$ re not prepared. For example, the group of teens traveling with an adventure camp that got lost heading to a camp out at Todd Lake on July 6. $\hat{a} \in \mathbb{C}$ They did not have the essentials, $\hat{a} \in \mathbb{C}$ he said. $\hat{a} \in \mathbb{C}$ They didn $\hat{a} \in \mathbb{C}$ have a GPS and appear not to have had a proper map. $\hat{a} \in \mathbb{C}$
Through his site, that is filled with tips, tools and techniques, and his mountaineering courses he hopes to educate and help keep more people safe.

